

Family Engagement Self Assessment

Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

This Family Engagement Self-Assessment tool is a modification of the Center for Study of Social Policy's Strengthening Families™ Self-Assessment Tool for Center-Based Early Care and Education Programs and Family Child Care Programs.

Licensing Number:	Program Name:	Action Plan Date:
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Parent Resilience: Resilience is the process of calling forth one's inner strength to proactively manage stress, meet personal/family challenges and be able to function well. Parental resilience includes the ability to provide nurturing and supportive care to one's child, even when faced with challenges, adversity, or trauma. Programs can provide a variety of resources for families to help build and support parental resilience. For example, programs can:

- **Demonstrate in multiple ways that parents are valued**
- **Honor each family’s race, ethnicity, language, culture, history, and approach to parenting**
- **Encourage parents to manage stress effectively**
- **Support parents as decision-makers and help build parents’ decision-making and leadership skills**
- **Help parents understand how to buffer their child during stressful times**

Protective Factor: Parental Resilience	No process at this time	Beginning	Progressing	Innovating	Comments, examples, sources of evidence	Include in Action Plan
How does your program demonstrate that parents are valued?						
Staff use a variety of methods to regularly provide information to families and to gather input on curriculum activities.						
Someone is available to greet families when they come in.						
Families are welcome to visit any time.						
Images and artwork throughout the physical space reflect the cultural diversity of families in the program community.						
Staff develop mutually respectful relationships with families; taking time to get to know family members by name.						

The program invites fathers to visit the program and works to engage them in activities.						
How do programs honor each family's race, language, culture, history, and approach to parenting?						
The program regularly gathers information about family interests, beliefs, and expectations, including those relating to the child's culture and language development, and seeks to partner with families in incorporating those features into the program activities and structure.						
Families have opportunities to share their skills, talents, and cultural traditions with children and other families.						
The program makes an effort to ensure that information and outreach materials are linguistically and culturally appropriate and inclusive (e.g. translated, whenever possible, into the language spoken by all families in the program community; reviewed by a Family Advisory Committee to ensure that they are culturally relevant and linguistically accessible to all families.)						
As part of staff orientation and ongoing staff development, program staff regularly have opportunities to develop skills and knowledge to effectively work with diverse families.						
The program seeks to build a staff that reflects the community and families served.						
How do programs encourage families to manage stress effectively?						

Staff know how to respond appropriately to family crisis and receive training and support on: understanding trauma and its impact on children and how staff can help, supporting families' immediate and long-term plans, talking to families about difficult issues, and maintaining confidentiality.						
Staff have support available to them when working with families under stress, such as opportunities to process their own emotional reactions, case conferencing with supervisors or team, or supportive supervision.						
How do programs support parents as decision-makers and help build decision-making and leadership skills?						
Staff encourage active parental decision-making about their children's education.						
Staff work cooperatively with families on shared child caregiving issues (e.g. routine separations, special needs, daily care issues, meals, and routines.)						
Families are always consulted on decisions that impact their child including: in cases of emergency; when child health, behavior or developmental issues are suspected; or when there are changes in teachers or schedules.						
The program provides information to families about potential changes in the program's overall operation and solicits parental input before implementing the changes.						
The program asks families for regular input on programmatic decisions and provides opportunities for families to volunteer and contribute to the program.						

The program encourages and supports families in becoming active members of the program's governing/advisory groups and in taking on leadership roles.						
The program helps to support the continued development of family leaders by supporting attendance at training events or conferences, and connecting families to external advocacy and policy groups/activities.						
<p>Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development: Gaining a deeper understanding of child development—including early brain development—helps parents know what to expect from their child. Knowledge of parenting and child development can also help parents understand what children need during each developmental phase. Programs can help parents increase their knowledge of parenting and child development. Programs should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model developmentally appropriate interactions with children • Provide information and resources on parenting and child development • Encourage parents to observe, ask questions, explore parenting issues, and try out new strategies • Address parenting issues from a strength-based perspective 						
Protective Factor: Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development	No process at this time	Beginning	Progressing	Innovating	Comments, examples, sources of evidence	Include in Action Plan
How do programs model developmentally appropriate interactions with children?						
Staff demonstrate a strong understanding of child development and participate in regular training to stay up-to-date on advances in the understanding of child development.						
For dual language learners, the program includes families in the process of gathering information about children's early exposure to languages and creates a plan to assess both languages in order to plan effective learning activities.						

Staff encourage parents to discuss behavioral challenges they may have at home, and provide information on developmentally appropriate positive discipline techniques and reasonable expectations.						
How do programs provide information and resources on parenting and child development?						
The program shares information with families about the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS) and how the GELDS are incorporated in classroom activities.						
Parenting information and materials used by the program are culturally and linguistically appropriate (e.g. available in the languages spoken by families; reflect a diversity of racial and ethnic backgrounds and family structures.)						
Parenting and child development information is provided through multiple avenues to meet diverse learning styles, including books and videos, parenting classes or discussion groups, regular postings on bulletin boards, posting of information and links on program website or social media pages, and take home materials distributed regularly to families.						
How do programs encourage parents to observe, ask questions, explore parenting issues, and try out new strategies?						
Family members are encouraged to visit any time and talk with staff about their observations and questions.						

<p>Staff discuss the program's system for formally and informally assessing children's progress with families, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the purposes of assessments • the procedures used for assessments • the procedures for gathering family input and information • the timing of assessments • the way assessment results or information is shared with families • how the program uses information from assessments • why assessments are helpful to the child, the program and the family 						
<p>Families and staff work together to design and organize opportunities for parent-led discussions, such as Parent Cafés, to explore parenting topics.</p>						
<p>Staff support families with children who have special needs by connecting families with materials, websites, support groups, play groups, and community resources.</p>						
<p>How do programs address parenting issues from a strength-based perspective?</p>						
<p>Staff share their observations of children with families to help families recognize their unique assets, temperament, personality, communication styles, and behavioral cues.</p>						
<p>Staff discuss the potential differences between the child's home culture and the expectations of the program, and how to manage these differences.</p>						
<p>Staff reinforce positive parent-child interactions by sharing something positive with families about what their child has done each day.</p>						

Concrete Support in Times of Need: Concrete support helps to ensure that families receive the basic necessities that everyone deserves in order to grow. Providing concrete support also ensures that families have access to any specialized medical, mental health, social, educational, or legal services they may need. Programs can help parents to identify, find, and receive concrete support in times of need. Programs should:

- Respond immediately when families are in crisis
- Provide information and connections to services in the community
- Help families to develop skills and tools they need to identify their needs and connect to supports

Protective Factor: Concrete Support in Times of Need	No process at this time	Beginning	Progressing	Innovating	Comments, examples, sources of evidence	Include in Action Plan
How do programs respond immediately when families are in crisis?						
Families are encouraged to turn to staff in the event of a crisis - staff listen and show concern and at least one staff member with a close relationship with the family reaches out to the family proactively.						
Programs include additional family members or close family supports in meetings whenever families believe doing so would be beneficial.						
Staff keep family issues confidential unless given explicit permission to share information (except when potential abuse or neglect is the issue.)						
Staff offer to connect families to resources, including help lines, community resources, or public agencies.						
If families bring up issues that staff feel unequipped to handle, staff can refer families to a specialist with knowledge in the area, community resources, or a cross-disciplinary staff team.						
How do programs provide information and connections to services in the community?						

<p>The program maintains up-to-date information about services in the community, including hours of operation, fees, locations, eligibility requirements, language capacities, etc.</p>						
<p>Families are encouraged to share information about community resources (e.g. toy exchanges, resale shops, family activities), as well as formal resources.</p>						
<p>The program actively builds collaborative links with other service providers by bringing services on site, easing the referral process by developing cross-program relationships, coordinating follow-up efforts, and identifying and advocating to fill resource gaps in the services available to families.</p>						
<p>Staff help families to identify and mobilize their own resources to address families' needs by encouraging families to take the lead when creating a plan to address family needs, encouraging families to advocate for themselves and their child, and providing information and guidance to families so that they understand their rights and learn how to navigate through service systems.</p>						
<p>When staff make referrals to outside services, they support family leadership by brainstorming with families about helpful resources, coaching families as they complete paperwork, and helping families learn how to address barriers to utilizing services (e.g. lack of transportation, child care, language barriers, cultural sensitivity, and inclusiveness.)</p>						

Social Emotional Competence of Children: The development of social and emotional competence—that is, characteristics such as self-regulation, self-confidence and social skills—depends on the quality of nurturing care, communication and stimulation that a child experiences. Programs can help to promote the social and emotional competence of children. Programs should:

- Help parents foster their child’s social emotional development
- Model nurturing care to children
- Include children’s social and emotional development activities in programming
- Help children develop a positive cultural identity and interact in a diverse society
- Respond proactively when social or emotional development needs extra support

Protective Factor: Social Emotional Competence of Children	No process at this time	Beginning	Progressing	Innovating	Comments, examples, sources of evidence	Include in Action Plan
How do programs help families foster their children's social emotional development?						
The program provides families information on the importance of supporting children's healthy social and emotional development - and its connection to success in school and life.						
The program helps families understand children's age appropriate social and emotional skills and behavior, and asks about parents' observations of their child's social and emotional development.						
Staff offer parents ideas on how to foster a child's social and emotional learning at home.						
How do programs model nurturing care to children?						
Staff encourage children to express their feelings through words, artwork, and expressive play.						
Staff respond consistently to children in a warm, supportive manner.						
Staff model empathy and appropriate emotional responsiveness.						

Staff receive training, consultation, and ongoing coaching to support their skills in supporting children's social emotional development.						
Staff respect the relationships and attachments that children form in the program by helping children process class and/or staffing changes and helping children learn to enter new settings or say goodbye when leaving the program.						
Staff encourage and reinforce social skills such as sharing, taking turns, and cooperative play.						
Staff set clear expectations and limits for behavior.						
How do programs respond proactively when social or emotional development needs extra support?						
The program uses evidence-based social and emotional screenings and assessments to inform individual lesson plans and appropriate referrals to outside services.						
Staff connect families with resources to support the child's social and emotional development and help families develop strategies for addressing the issue at home.						
How do programs help children develop a positive cultural identity and learn to interact in a diverse society?						
The program welcomes and affirms the cultures of families it serves by inviting families to define and express their ethnicity or culture, including the experiences and values they hold to be most important.						

The staff incorporate classroom activities including stories and discussions regarding cultural and linguistic differences.						
Program policies and practices support the preservation of home language/dialects by encouraging staff to use children's home languages for multiple learning purposes.						
The program makes resources available to assist families in the maintenance and development of the home language						
Staff set specific language goals for children in conjunction with families' wishes (e.g. dual language/bilingual, single language.)						
How do programs support children's transitions?						
The program helps families recognize how to choose high quality early childhood and school-age settings and services, including special education services.						
The program encourages parents to stay engaged in children's long-term development and to take leadership roles in children's education.						
The program provides general information on enrollment procedures and practices, and helps families understand what to expect from the new program, kindergarten, or grade school.						
The program conducts joint transition trainings with other programs and local educational agencies.						
Staff participate in transition meetings with the family and new service provider or educational agency.						